



TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

2017 County Historical Commission (CHC) Project Descriptions

Select projects are taken from reporting information from select Distinguished Service Award-winning CHCs. County population and CHC sizes are provided to demonstrate the breadth of successful preservation efforts that can come from large and small groups located in rural and urban areas of the state.

Aransas CHC—Proactive Promotion of Historic Sites

County Population: 25,350 *CHC Appointee Count: 12*

The *Stroll thru Rockport* is a wellness walk that highlights historical markers and VIP signage. It was initiated by the Healthy South Texas within AgriLife. The event's goal was to encourage healthy living with the walk also strolling by the community garden sponsored by Master Gardeners. Aransas CHC provided narrative and costumed docents at each historical stop. Organizations involved included Healthy South Texas, AgriLife, Aransas CHC, Friends of History Center, the Historical Society, Aransas Pathways, and the Chamber of Commerce. Each organization utilized its network to publicize the event, including social media outlets. The map created for this event is now stocked at the Rockport Fulton Visitor Center and at the History Center for Aransas County so that folks can follow the route at any time.

Austin CHC—Locating Neglected and Abandoned Cemeteries

County Population: 29,563 *CHC Appointee Count: 15*

Our cemetery committee began looking for neglected and abandoned graves in 2016 and have located approximately 250 cemeteries as of February 2018. Of that number, 47 are identified as abandoned, having no maintenance nor protection. We continue to receive information about additional cemeteries that we have yet to inventory. Many of these tips come from people who are interested in genealogy and want to know where their ancestors are buried. Helping these people and locating cemeteries has been a very fulfilling project for our CHC appointees.

Burleson CHC—Celebrating Texas Archeology Month (TAM)

County Population: 17,460 *CHC Appointee Count: 16*

Burleson CHC hosted a TAM luncheon with a presentation on the excavation activities at San Felipe de Austin given by Texas Historical Commission archeologist, Jeff Durst. Event attracted people committed to all facets of Texas history, archeology research and findings, and learning more about excavations at the San Felipe de Austin site. Between 40-50 attended the presentation, coming from seven counties. To promote the event, appointees contacted and coordinated with area CHCs and museums, asking them to share this information with their members and encourage attendance. Organizations were also asked to promote event by distributing news releases to area media and posting info on Facebook pages. Because of our efforts, several attendees expressed a desire to return to Burleson County to see museums and sites in the county.

Bexar CHC—GIS Project with Students from University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA)

County Population: 1.8 million CHC Appointee Count: 17

Graduate history students researched pre-historical Bexar County community life, as well as the Spanish Colonial era, to develop several internet-based research and learning tools, to be hosted on the Bexar CHC web page in conjunction with the Bexar County Heritage Department web pages. Students produced interactive mapping resources and a SketchUp video presentation of the community of San Fernando de Bexar, circa 1762. Bexar CHC sent liaisons to UTSA classes to assist students with research and provided general oversight for the project. Commissioners court has funded this project for two years, resulting in additional student involvement and more data. The web interface is live and was shared at the Texas State Historical Association Annual Meeting for Texas historians from across the state to see.

Chambers CHC—Chambers County Courthouse Anniversary

County Population: 38,863 CHC Appointee Count: 12

Chambers CHC hosted a public birthday party for the Chambers County Courthouse to celebrate its 80th year. Celebration was staged on the main floor of the courthouse on a day when court was in session. This decision not only ensured that county officials could attend, but also their involvement in event decision-making. The Chamber of Commerce, our newest partner, helped advertise the event on its Facebook page and through email. Another valued partner, *The Progress*—the local paper, printed advertisements free of charge, following up with stories and photos.

We featured two illustrated project boards entitled, “Life in the 1930’s” and “History of the Chambers County Courthouse.” When court was adjourned, everyone filed out through our exhibits, with music from the 30’s playing softly in the background. The patriotic party décor featured our dark blue “Chambers County Historical Commission” tablecloths and red slushy punch to complement the large birthday cake. One of our appointees who was present at that 1937 dedication recounted the history of our courthouse and highlighted the contributions of past elected officials. The county judge then delivered a toast to the courthouse, and the cake was cut by two grandchildren of the 1937 judge. At the end of the event, the judge signed our marker application requesting RTHL status for our courthouse.

Because of this event, many citizens, lawyers, and county staff received a deeper appreciation for this iconic building. We received positive feedback for hosting a history filled event in such an enjoyable manner.

Cherokee CHC— Opportunities to Educate through Heritage Tourism Efforts

County Population: 51,542 CHC Appointee Count: 16

Cherokee CHC promote area tourism by providing CHC’s Cherokee County Trails/Historical Marker maps to the Jacksonville Chamber of Commerce, the Love’s Lookout Tourist Center, and other tourist material hubs in the county. Appointees also regularly participate in events associated with Caddo Mounds State Historic Site and the Jacksonville Tomato Fest. These CHCs efforts are tourism-related but also educational efforts for the CHC.

Appointees are active participants on boards and committees for the Tomato Fest and Caddo Mounds. The Tomato Fest continues to grow, with 15,000 visitors coming to Jacksonville in 2017. Caddo Mounds welcomed 10,000 visitors in 2017. CHC sets up history booths/exhibits at events associated with both groups. Participating in these activities has enabled the CHC to connect to new audiences, exponentially expanding the impact of CHC efforts.

CHC also participates in more hands-on preservation work related to heritage tourism. Appointees helped throughout each stage to build a replica of a Caddo Grass House: cutting switch grass, stripping poles, etc. Cherokee CHC were also involved in conducting tours at the site for students. One appointee, a Texas Archeological Steward, was able to provide information about the site's Native American history and influences in the county. These opportunities enable our CHC to combine educational and tourism efforts.

DeWitt CHC—Connecting People to History and Historic Places

County Population: 20,797 *CHC Appointee Count: 52*

DeWitt CHC works to improve partnerships with the Cuero Main Street Project and Cuero Chamber of Commerce. During Preservation Month, we co-hosted a program in which appointees stood on the steps of the Cuero Heritage Museum to act as visitors from the past, sharing memories of the businesses that were in Cuero during that period. We participated in the Downtown Christmas two-day event by strolling in costume and having photos made with the citizens. These projects were well received by the community. Another way we contribute is to provide tour guides as bus tours are often planned for this area in association with the Cuero Chamber of Commerce. In December, a tour was given showing the historic homes in Cuero that were moved here after the Indianola hurricane. The bus tour company has asked the CHC to provide a tour guide for an upcoming tour of museums in Cuero, so our efforts have created new opportunities for the future.

Fannin CHC—Community Heritage Quilt Exhibition

County Population: 33,693 *CHC Appointee Count: 9*

During 2017, Fannin CHC partnered to sponsor the Bonham Quilt Hop, a two-day heritage tourism event. Fannin CHC representatives helped plan the event and prepared an exhibit of quilts from the local African American community. Families within this community loaned some of the quilts for this exhibition. Information on the families represented in the exhibition were prepared, including photos of the quilters and families. Fannin CHC prepared news articles for print and online media in advance of the event. Fannin CHC partnered with the following organizations to host the Quilt Hop: Bonham Tourism Office, the Fannin County Museum of History, the Bonham Public Library, the Creative Arts Center, the Bonham Senior Citizens Center, the Rayburn Library and Sam Rayburn House, and the Honey Grove Preservation League. Each of these organizations displayed quilts during the weekend event. This was a unique exhibit, which was enjoyed and appreciated by the visitors and individuals who participated in the exhibition.

Fort Bend CHC—Proactive Title

County Population: 716,087 CHC Appointee Count: 64

Like most CHCs, Fort Bend has not performed a significant update to its existing cultural resource survey. Data collected over the last 30 years was recorded in an informal manner. So, we organized a committee in late 2016 to update our survey and record updates in a formal, organized data base. Our Historic Preservation Committee launched this survey project in 2017 with great enthusiasm, preparing forms, procedures, and a data base to facilitate their effort. The survey's scope is broad, attempting to identify all historically significant properties, assess their level of endangerment, and record their characteristics. The team collected a significant amount of information, but realized this survey update is a challenging endeavor with a distant completion date. Our project team is learning as it goes, knowing that although slower than expected, their results will provide accurate and useful data that is an investment in future stewardship of our resources.

Franklin CHC—Proactive Title

County Population: 10,651 CHC Appointee Count: 12

Franklin CHC worked with state leadership of the [Native Prairies of Texas Association](#) to coordinate an event for its Dallas/Fort Worth chapter and the [Texas Historic Tree Coalition](#). Participants traveled by bus to Franklin County and met CHC representatives at the Choctaw Trail and Cherokee Trace intersection. From there, they traveled on abandoned road beds through wildflowers and prairieland discussing the lay of the land, the development of farming, sharecropping, and early settlement patterns.

The group then traveled to Mt. Vernon to tour downtown sites and enjoy the local hospitality. Tours included the fire station museum, which features collections of bird eggs, butterflies, cotton bales and other natural history exhibits. Museum also features art by Deborah Paris, who has been commissioned by the Botanical Research Institute of Texas to paint out on the historic Daphne Prairie—a 922-acre virgin prairie with the unchanged landscape encountered by Texans who first arrived in this country. Participants visited the old church inn for a buffet supper that was catered by CHC and local volunteers. This community effort has broadened the tourism base, as several participants plan to return in the future.

Harris CHC—Featuring Tours Focused on County History

County Population: 4.5 million CHC Appointee Count: 29

Harris CHC began participating in heritage tourism efforts two years ago and recently started to add tourism-related information to the CHC's website. Recent efforts have highlighted Sam Houston Park, the 1910 courthouse, Heights neighborhood markers, and Camp Logan history. Website content was provided for educational and utilization purposes by students, locals, and visitors. Additionally, the website includes driving tour information for East End Historical Markers, Tomball, Hockley and Klein Historical Markers. Walking tours feature Founders Cemetery, enabling a self-guided tour of gravestone inscriptions. Virtual tours feature the Harris County Courthouse District. The CHC website also features a Harris County Tour Providers Directory (created by another organization) that includes 60 tourism services in Harris County, along with contact information to access services and a short note about each activity.

Harrison CHC—History Fair in Marshall

County Population: 66,746 CHC Appointee Count: 31

Harrison CHC sponsored a History Fair for the Marshall ISD using National History Day criteria. Dozens of students participated in traditional exhibits, performance, and documentary categories. Each category allowed for both individual and group efforts. First and second place medallions were awarded, and each student received a participation certificate. CHC provided judges and judging form based on National History Day forms. All the other ISDs within Harrison County were invited to attend and observe. The local media attended, and articles were written about the student's efforts, including photos. We let participants know that the CHC plans to sponsor a county-wide Fair in 2018.

Hays CHC—Historic Jail Restored for Future Use

County Population: 194,739 CHC Appointee Count: 22

Hays CHC has been restoring the 1884 Hays County Jail for the past twelve years. This project has involved preparing a master plan, fund-raising, event planning, conducting tours for educational awareness, and planning for its future use. The building is being restored to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Historic Preservation. The exterior work to the building is now complete, and an architect has been hired to begin the final phase—interior restoration. The jail will be used as a museum with exhibits on the history of outlaws in central Texas. This building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is designated as a State Antiquities Landmark. It is located within a locally designated historic district and will be part of a museum district in San Marcos, which includes the Calaboose African-American Museum, the LBJ Museum, and the Hays County Courthouse Museum. Its location and adjacency to other historic sites maximizes the potential of this museum to be a successful and sustainable addition to our county.

Jeff Davis CHC—Working with the Public to Preserve Cemeteries

County Population: 2,156 CHC Appointee Count: 13

Jeff Davis CHC continues to gather information on the three cemeteries in Fort Davis to fill in missing information, to correct erroneous information, and to assist in mapping the cemeteries. These cemeteries are the historic Pioneer Cemetery, the Hillcrest Cemetery, and the St. Joseph Cemetery. The latter is not owned by the Catholic Church or by the Catholic Diocese of El Paso, but by an independent group of citizens. Commission appointee Jerry Dumas oversees the Hillcrest Cemetery. Commission appointee Dan Vasquez oversees the St. Joseph Cemetery. The Fort Davis Historical Society owns the Pioneer Cemetery. Working with Jerry, Dan, and the Society, progress was made in identifying unknown graves. A map of the graves in the St. Joseph Cemetery, developed several years ago, was found and copied for CHC use. Progress was also made in identifying burials in the Hillcrest Cemetery. On a related note, an Eagle Scout Project done several years ago was found that identified 147 graves (with coordinates) in the Pioneer Cemetery. Although no names were given, the information has been helpful in identifying placement of graves and trying to link unknowns with identified grave sites.

Jeff Davis CHC—Working with Partners to Research Memorial Square

County Population: 2,156 CHC Appointee Count: 13

The Memorial Square marker exhibit tells the story of the development of the town square and construction of various buildings on the square. This wayside exhibit—well-received by townspeople and visitors alike—was officially unveiled on October 10, 2017, in front of the Jeff Davis County Library, formerly known as the Union Mercantile Building. The exhibit's placement on the square is adjacent to the Chamber of Commerce and the Limpia Hotel, which are popular gathering places for tourists.

This effort demonstrated quality CHC partnerships with multiple organizations and local businesses. Attempting to find historic photographs of the square was quite a task, so several institutions were called upon for help. Necessary historic photos were found thanks to the Fort Davis Historical Society, the Archives of the Big Bend at Sul Ross State University, Fort Davis National Historic Site, and the Marfa and Presidio County Museum that housed the Duncan Photographic Collection. Thanks also goes to Martini Construction of Fort Davis for erecting the exhibit at no cost. We're grateful that the county judge and commissioners allowed the wayside exhibit to be erected in front of the county library.

Jim Hogg CHC—Ranching Heritage Day Highlights Vaquero Traditions

County Population: 5,200 CHC Appointee Count: 13

Jim Hogg CHC partnered to host the second Ranching Heritage Day that took place on the courthouse grounds, Old Jail Museum, and the First National Bank of Hebbronville. Partners included The Museum Foundation of Hebbronville, Vaqueros of South Texas, Vaquero Festival Association, Jim Hogg County Independent School District, local businesses, and the county judge and commissioners, as well as, other elected officials.

Event activities were held in a variety of downtown locations. In the courthouse courtroom, seasoned vaqueros provided a very impressive Ranch Life presentation about experiences from their days working at area ranches. The courthouse grounds were used for camp cooking, leather crafts, and Native American arts and dance demonstrations, along with information and food booths. A meeting room at the First National Bank, located adjacent to the courthouse, was the venue for the Cactus Council to show off their cooking efforts with samples, plants, and cookbooks. Also, in the bank meeting room was a wonderful exhibit of area ranches and ranching families. The museum featured a very impressive Vaqueros of South Texas exhibit. Two local businesses allowed us to use their vacant lots (located across from the museum) to provide pony rides, dummy roping, and goat petting for kids. Entertaining the crowd were the award-winning Hebbronville High School Mariachi Band and The Herrera Brothers—recent inductees to the Tejano Roots Hall of Fame. New this year to the Ranching Heritage event was an impressive western art exhibit featuring local artists.

Ranching Heritage Day 2017 was a huge success. The event took months to plan and the community organizations, businesses, community leaders, school system and community members all pulled together and made it happen. What a joy for our CHC to bring everyone together to promote our local and area ranching and Vaquero history and culture.

Lamar CHC—Partner to Promote Heritage Tourism

County Population: 49,440 CHC Appointee Count: 22

Lamar CHC sponsored the naming of a bridge after Earl Erickson, father of the Trail de Paris and a major force in creating the Northeast Texas Trail—120 miles of bike/hike/equestrian trail that begins in Farmersville and ends in New Boston. The trail will promote major heritage tourism as it follows the old railroad lines and runs directly through every small downtown in East Texas. When completed, it will be the 3rd longest trail in the United States. Lamar CHC organized a dedication celebration that included balloon arches, 20 bicyclists, 50 supporters, news coverage, hot dog supper, the high school drum corps. To further encourage tourism, Lamar CHC appointees have created a database of all the bed and breakfasts, bike shops, eateries, and other useful amenities for travelers on the trail.

Lampasas CHC—Continuing Cemetery Efforts

County Population: 20,588 CHC Appointee Count: 24

Lampasas CHC has continued the cemetery survey project in 2017. We continue to clean cemeteries and apply for historical designations. Our long-range goal is to re-survey every public and private cemetery, locate new burial sites, record information on each grave marker, and note any historical markers or designations of each site. Corrections have been made and physical locations documented with longitude and latitude, as well as, driving directions. Data has been entered in Find-A-Grave, a free nationwide website. It is our hope that the surveys will be completed this year, so that we can provide a published version of the information, compiling a book or CD to highlight cemeteries in Lampasas County.

Liberty CHC—Brochures and Maps that Promote Heritage Tourism Activities

County Population: 79,654 CHC Appointee Count: 54

Liberty CHC contributes a great deal of time and effort to encourage heritage tourism our area. We partner with local chambers of commerce, historical societies, and other civic groups to provide brochures and maps of historic areas of the county. We keep this tourism material updated, providing contact information and the volunteer services the CHC provides. A few ongoing services are hop-on/hop-off bus tours of the historic areas of Liberty, Dayton, and Cleveland. The CHC organizes docents and guides and arranges additional tours of area museums and historic buildings. We coordinate with other local museums in Dayton and Cleveland to develop additional tours, as well as, make suggestions and/or arrangements for lunch and shopping in our communities. We also partner and coordinate with area businesses, such as the Liberty Opry, for additional entertainment while visiting our county.

Our historic driving tour maps of Dayton, Liberty and Cleveland have been a huge success and we continue to refine them. Our brochures include the History of Liberty County and the Seven Courthouses of Liberty County, which are very popular for groups coming into the area to spend the day. Tours of our historic courthouse are available through our CHC. We also participate in events hosted by our partners. CHC volunteers are always active during the Liberty Jubilee and Old Thyme Days—huge community events that attract large crowds from outside of our county, as well as, local citizens!

Lubbock CHC—Finding County Artifacts

County Population: 299,453 CHC Appointee Count: 17

Lubbock CHC appointees volunteer at the Lubbock County Record Center. This year's work resulted in preservation of significant county artifacts. When the Record Center was built, boxes were relocated from the courthouse basement but were not formally organized. Appointees have been inventorying and cataloging box contents and sorting historical county records. During one work session, appointees found a box containing "lion heads" or gargoyles that had been on the 1917 courthouse. There are at least six sculptures in varying conditions. Originally, 200 lion heads adorned the courthouse, with 50 mounted just below the ledge on each side of the building but only a few were salvaged when the building was demolished in 1968. The CHC and the county are grateful that these artifacts were rediscovered!

McCulloch CHC—Proactive Title

County Population: 8,341 CHC Appointee Count: 11

McCulloch CHC developed a Mexican Heritage Project in partnership with Brady's Mexican Colony Park Committee. Representatives from both groups established the project's goals: to identify paths followed by early Mexican settlers into McCulloch County, and to identify the economic, cultural, and educational challenges that confronted those settlers.

We decided to incorporate the project into the Colony's 2017 "Diez y Seis" celebration. CHC appointees agreed to develop educational presentations for the public, while the Colony agreed to organize the traditional evening dance. CHC received a Humanities Texas mini-grant to fund the project included the cost of renting the grantor's traveling photographic essay by Bill Wittliff, entitled "Vaquero: History of the Texas Cowboy." We used the exhibit to pique public interest in the upcoming celebration, displaying the exhibit in the historic courthouse foyer weeks before the event, and then in the Brady High School library. Heavily publicized in the local newspaper and by the local radio station, the exhibit generated much local interest, especially among those with "vaquero" memories and those who still apply vaquero techniques to their ranching tasks.

On September 16, Mexican Colony Park was decorated in traditional festival style with the vaquero exhibit making its final appearance. Event speakers discussed the routes their ancestors followed into McCulloch County and the challenges faced upon their arrival. Each speaker had faced discrimination in social and educational systems that segregated the Mexican and Anglo populations. Many concerns were expressed that Mexican traditions and cultural identity are not being preserved or honored by younger generations. The CHC plans to continue honoring this significant part of our county history.

Marion CHC—Proactive Title

County Population: 10,160 CHC Appointee Count: 9

Marion CHC gives achievement awards in the areas of History, Preservation, Archeology, Genealogy, the Arts, and Community Service. This effort helps the CHC become more involved with the community and to recognize citizens of Marion County who selflessly give of their time and talents. To gather award nominations, appointees met with members of the Jefferson Historical Society and Museum, Mason/Dixon

Line Museum, Marion County Genealogical Society, Opera House Theater Players, and Caddo Lake Historical Research Committee. With help from these organizations, the awards ceremony took place in the ballroom of a Marion County historic hotel, the Excelsior House. This successful event was well-attended and covered by the local press. This effort makes the most of local partnerships and encourages other community contributors to continue to serve.

Medina CHC—Phased Rehabilitation Project

County Population: 48,417 *CHC Appointee Count: 22*

Medina CHC has partnered with the Castro Colonies Association (CCHA) and City of Castroville to purchase and restore the Biry-Ahr House in Castroville. The home was one of the first built by the early settlers to Medina County. Having started over ten years ago, this project has been planned and managed by Medina CHC appointees since its beginning. CCHA, with Medina CHC leadership, obtained a grant of \$250,000 to purchase and restore the property. Scheduled to open soon, the restored Biry-Ahr House will be a house museum with period furnishings called, the Castro Colonies Visitor Center. Phase 2 of the project will restore the dogtrot. Phase 3 will build a museum on the back side of the property. We know this will be a major tourist attraction to Medina County!

Menard CHC—Living History Events

County Population: 2,164 *CHC Appointee Count: 10*

Menard CHC presented an original, dramatic living history performance entitled, "A Walk Through Time," based upon historical figures from Menard County history, going back over 1,000 years. Most lines spoken by the re-enactors were taken directly (often verbatim) from original Spanish and early pioneer diaries and records. Characters included the following: a local Native American chief; Fray Jose de Molina, the lone surviving priest from the massacre of the San Saba Mission; Coronel Padilla, Commander of the Presidio; James Bowie; a Texas "49er" reading from his diary about visits to the Presidio ruins, and early Anglo settlers.

The Presidio Historical Site provided the perfect venue for the performance, thereby highlighting the beauty and significance of the site, while introducing it to many first-time visitors. Menard Country Club provided additional chairs and other practical support. Menard High School videotaped the production and its students portrayed various characters in the performance. The production was heavily covered by the Menard News, with extensive stories both before and after the production. The performance was well-received, with over 150 people attending. We anticipate an even larger audience next year because it will be presented during Menard's "Jim Bowie Days."

Milam CHC—Proactive Title

County Population: 24,513 *CHC Appointee Count: 24*

The City of Rockdale Police Department is located in the Old City Hall, one of the oldest and most architecturally significant buildings in town. Because a new police station will be built in 2018, CHC appointees promote saving the Old City Hall at every opportunity, in cooperation with the City, the Rockdale Downtown Association, and other individuals. Milam CHC appointees actively encouraged the City to

protect and preserve the Old City Hall by speaking at city council meetings and meeting with city officials to recommend the building's preservation. Milam CHC members urged the City to hire a historic preservation consultant to review the condition of the 123-year-old building and prepare a master plan for its reuse. Milam CHC donated \$500 to the rehabilitation effort. Additionally, CHC appointees are actively involved in the non-profit established to raise funds for the restoration—Save the Old City Hall. We are optimistic for the future of this building, especially because an anonymous donor offered to match funds raised by the City for the rehabilitation.

Nacogdoches CHC—Phase II of El Camino Real Way-finding

County Population: 65,664 *CHC Appointee Count: 7*

El Camino Real de los Tejas National Historic Trail signs designated for downtown Nacogdoches were diverted to an alternate route of the Camino Real along FM Road 225. Future phases of trail development will create an official loop of two interconnecting roads of the Camino on the western side of Nacogdoches County. This change will link downtown Nacogdoches with major marked historic sites: Douglass Pavilion, Mission Concepcion, Presidio Dolores, Bernardo D'Ortolan Rancho, Rafael D'Ortolan slave quarters, a grist mill, and the Deshazo historic Caddo site. For tourists, this loop will provide a pleasant short 1.5-hour loop drive through the piney woods and rolling hills of east Texas, with beautiful views of Lake Nacogdoches and stops at great Caddo Indian and early Spanish and French Colonial sites. These changes will increase traffic to the trail, requiring collaboration among stakeholders, namely the Nacogdoches CHC, El Camino Real National Historic Trails Association, National Park Service, County of Nacogdoches, and TxDOT. These partnerships and improvements will increase visibility to significant historical and cultural sites in our region.

Navarro CHC—Bears Field Marker Efforts

County Population: 48,323 *CHC Appointee Count: 10*

Navarro CHC collaborated with the Jackson High Ex-Students Association to honor the site of the former high school athletic field, Bears Field. This historically African American school had several winning seasons and state championships but closed its doors in 1970 when Corsicana schools were integrated. The site has become a community gathering place for former students, teachers, principals and coaches who meet to honor the school, its accomplishments, and special history. We hope honoring the field and associated accomplishments of former students provides the public with an opportunity to learn more about the school and its role in our community's history. This project helps to fill the gaps we have in interpreting the diverse history of our county and address an underrepresented area in the county.

Newton CHC—Purple Hull Pea Festival

County Population: 13,986 *CHC Appointee Count: 13*

Newton CHC continues to support the annual Texas Purple Hull Pea Festival; the June 2017 event welcomed over 400 attendees. This festival is organized by the Shankleville Heritage Society and focuses on Freedom Colonies in east Texas, including the Shankleville Community where the festival was held. Newton CHC promoted the festival on its Facebook and website, as well as, displayed posters and handouts. CHC

volunteers helped acquire festival sponsorships and placed festival road signs throughout the county, and a CHC representative participated on a panel discussion during the festival. County Commissioner Thomas Gill, State Representative James White, and US Congressman Brian Babin attended the festival, which featured purple hull pea cooking contests and children's activities, such as picking and shelling peas. There also were tours of the historical Shankleville cemetery and Odom House. The Newton History Center & Museum extended regular hours to remain open during the festival. This event is a wonderful way to share the history of our county!

Polk CHC—World War I Commemoration Efforts

County Population: 46,972 CHC Appointee Count: 15

Polk CHC partnered with the Polk County Museum to sponsor a World War I exhibit and reception/open house at the museum. CHC worked with the VFW and American Legion organizations to obtain artifacts and memorabilia to display at the museum. CHC partnered with the local newspaper to cover the event, enabling a CHC appointee to write articles about Polk County World War I soldiers. These articles appeared weekly during the month leading up to the ceremony.

On the day of the event, a ribbon cutting ceremony was held as the chamber ambassadors from many businesses presented a certificate to the museum curator. During the ceremony, the VFW played taps and raised the flag for the event. Additionally, a proclamation was read by event attendee, Representative James White. Guests included the county judge, chamber executive secretary, city manager, and city council members, along with many community leaders and citizens. The exhibits featured during the event, will remain at the museum for public view for the entire year, drawing attention to World War I Commemoration activities across the state.

Rusk CHC—Supporting the Heritage Syrup Festival

County Population: 53,070 CHC Appointee Count: 28

Rusk County CHC supports the annual Heritage Syrup Festival, an event that involves the entire community. The Depot Museum curator and staff organized the event. Rusk County pays for advertising, and the Tourism Director advertises the festival a year in advance. The Henderson Tourism Director coordinated with the Main Street Downtown Director to make sure the festival vendors work with the local businesses to everyone's advantage. Local businesses provided the pickups, wagons, and hay for the festival shuttle. The Rusk County Extension Service coordinated the 4-H and FFA club members who provided shuttle service from the museum to the center of Town where many vendors set up booths. The Henderson Police blocked off streets and directed traffic to ensure the safety of citizens and tourists. The Heritage Association opened the 1855 Howard-Dickinson House as an added feature of the festival. CHC appointees (along with family and friends) participated in a variety of ways: gate admissions, giving directions, storytelling, Rusk CHC book/card sales, running the carousel, and making syrup—a feat which required volunteers to feed cane into the crusher, tend the mules, gather the juice, stoke the fire, stir the syrup etc. Also participating in this community event were local hotels and restaurants, service stations, convenience stores, museums, and clubs.

Tyler CHC—Promoting Local Historic Sites

County Population: 21,347 *CHC Appointee Count: 14*

Tyler CHC managed our Fourth Annual Tyler County on Tour, which promotes heritage tourism and recognizes preservation efforts in our area. The tour was planned and scheduled in coordination with the chamber of commerce and the 74th annual Tyler County Dogwood Festival. This year's tour had events at three historical churches in our county. Flyers and details of the tour and activities for each site were published in our county newspaper and made available to schools and businesses. Newspaper articles on the history of the churches were researched and written by CHC appointees with assistance from the community and church members.

At the first tour stop, the county judge and church members unveiled a Texas Historical Marker for the Mt. Hope Methodist Church. The marker dedication and unveiling were preceded by a program of flag pledges, songs led by youth, and stories by a local historian and CHC member. A barbeque lunch on the grounds was served to the 100 plus attendees. The next stop was the historic Cherokee Church located in Heritage Village, operated by the Tyler County Heritage Society. CHC partnered with Heritage Village to open the church for tour purposes and host a Tyler County Student Art Exhibit, which was sponsored with our county school districts. Refreshments were served, and awards presented for student work featuring historic churches in our county. Tour and exhibit drew a steady stream of parents and visitors throughout the day. The last stop was a building and grounds tour of the Fellowship Primitive Baptist Church established in 1867 in the Warren community. Over cookies and lemonade, church members explained the origin of the church's name and demonstrated "shape note music," with four-part harmony sans musical instruments. Attendees were fascinated and delighted by the presentation and the entire tour!

Webb CHC—Partnering to Promote Local History

County Population: 269,721 *CHC Appointee Count: 8*

Webb CHC partnered with Expedition Texas—a television show based out of the Dallas area—to showcase the lesser known historic district of the Barrio Azteca and other historic sites in Laredo. The working title for the episode is "Lost Laredo" and explores Laredo history with an emphasis on the importance of historic preservation and the prominent role of storytelling/oral history in this process. CHC arranged for a historian from Texas A&M International University, Dr. Stanley Green, to partner with us on the project. Filming took place on March 18–19, 2017. Several CHC appointees led the tour and were interviewed on camera including Alfredo Gutierrez, Jorge Santana, Lily Perez, and Renee LaPerriere. The CHC hopes that this project will serve as an oral history of the historic Azteca neighborhood. This positive contribution to local heritage tourism efforts will inspire Texans to learn about, as well as, visit our part of the state.

Wheeler CHC—Proactive Promotion of Historic Sites and Organizations

County Population: 5,657 *CHC Appointee Count: 7*

For the first time in 17 years, TxDOT held the annual Travel Fair in Amarillo, Texas, in April 2017. The state highway tourist center's employees are the attendees and the host areas have the opportunity to showcase their communities—what there is to see and do in the area. Attendees take brochures and flyers back to their travel/tourist centers to help tell the tourists about the stories and sites in the area. CHC provided an

informational flyer with photos, rack cards for museums/historical sites, and a county map that could be handed out to the public. The Travel Fair booths are very expensive, so the Wheeler CHC partnered with the following organizations to participate: Texas Plains Trail Region, Panhandle Tourism and Marketing, Gray County White Deer Land Museum, and Carson County Square House Museum. Organizations were able to share information with over 100 Travel Center employees and discuss our area sites and museums.

Wise CHC—Proactive Title

County Population: 62,953 CHC Appointee Count: 16

Wise County is associated with historic cattle trails, including the historic Chisolm Trail. In 2017, we celebrated the 150th anniversary of the great cattle roundups to markets in Kansas. For years, Wise CHC has participated in the annual Chisolm Trail Days celebration in Decatur and Wise County, but ramped up this year's festivities. Wise County hosts the festival on the courthouse square and a rodeo at the county fairgrounds. CHC worked with the Decatur Main Street Board and Decatur Chamber of Commerce to promote this weekend event. During the event, appointees helped the Wise County Heritage Museum and CHC archives stay open to citizens, especially those who want more information about the trail's history and Wise County's contribution. Event provided an opportunity to promote the 100th anniversary of the U.S. entering WWI and other military history associated with the area, such as the Lost Battalion of World War II.

Wood CHC—Proactive Title

County Population: 43,356 CHC Appointee Count: 14

As sponsor of the Jr. Historian program, Wood CHC helped students find research contacts and apply for an Undertold Maker for R.C. Hickman. Native to Mineola, Mr. Hickman left for the Armed Forces, returning to work for a newspaper in Dallas and attend photography school. Becoming a professional photographer, he toured Texas and neighboring states taking photos of black schools to document conditions, showing the contrast between white and black schools. When segregation ended, he took photographs of those events, as well. Mr. Hickman's collection and books now are displayed at the Dolph Briscoe Center. With help from the CHC, the Mineola Jr. Historians sponsored a showing of photographs taken by R. C. Hickman. During a local reunion for the Addie McFarland Schools, an exhibit of Mr. Hickman's photographs was displayed at the McFarland Center. The Mineola Memorial Library also showcased photos that had been moved from the McFarland Center to the library. The school reunion drew former students who lived all over the United States, and we estimate that several hundred attended the reunion and associated events.

More about CHC performance on the following weblinks

CHC reporting summaries and project descriptions

<http://www.thc.texas.gov/preserve/projects-and-programs/county-historical-commission-outreach/annual-reporting-chcs>

More about the Distinguished Service Award

www.thc.texas.gov/preserve/projects-and-programs/county-historical-commission-outreach/service-awards-chcs-and-chc



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